UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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AID. INTERIOR TO JOIN IN WORLD-WIDE DRIVE AGAINST FOOD PESTS

The United States will seek to help less-developed nations protect food supplies from the ravages of rodents and bird pests, the Agency for International Development and the Department of the Interior announced today.

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and William S. Gaud, AID Administrator, will sign an agreement April 5 providing for a 5-year research and training program to reinforce the world-wide War on Hunger. The program will focus on development of safe and effective methods for dealing with pests. Chemicals found to possess promising biological application, such as repellancy or reproduction inhibition, will be used on target species at field stations to be established in different parts of the world. In addition, studies will be made of each species causing damage, with particular attention devoted to physiology and to feeding, reproduction, and migration. About 25 U. S. scientists and an equal number from developing countries may be involved in the project.

This interagency effort is essentially aimed at helping food-short countries conserve their available food supplies and also is expected to provide improved rodentcontrol measures in the U.S.

The control program is also expected to benefit human health. Secretary Udall said. "Control measures should reduce the incidence of bubonic plague, which is usually transmitted to humans through bites from ratfleas, and rabies that are carried by vampire bats and other animals," he added.

In some countries, pests destroy 20 to 50 percent of harvested grain and other food. Great flocks of weaver finches in Africa cause widespread damage to millet. sorghum, rice, and other grains. Rabid bats are believed to cause the death of thousands of cattle each year in Latin America. Rats are the chief source of destruction to crops in Asia.

The research program will be centered at the Interior Department's Wildlife Research installation in Denver, Colo., operated by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

AID is expected to provide over \$2 million the next five years. Administrator Gaud said this would be supplemented by participating countries.

The pest-control project is part of a new general operating agreement between Interior and AID, outlining for Interior greater responsibilities in planning, organizing, and coordinating certain foreign technical assistance programs. Interior also will continue to furnish advisory and training services for AID's technical assistance programs as it has since the early 1950's. Each year Interior trains about 650 foreign participants and now has approximately 200 experts abroad under AID programs, principally in the areas of water and mineral resources. AID is collaborating with Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in studies and experiments on fish protein concentrates in still another effort to help feed the world's hungry millions. $\mathbf{x} \mathbf{x} \mathbf{x}$

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